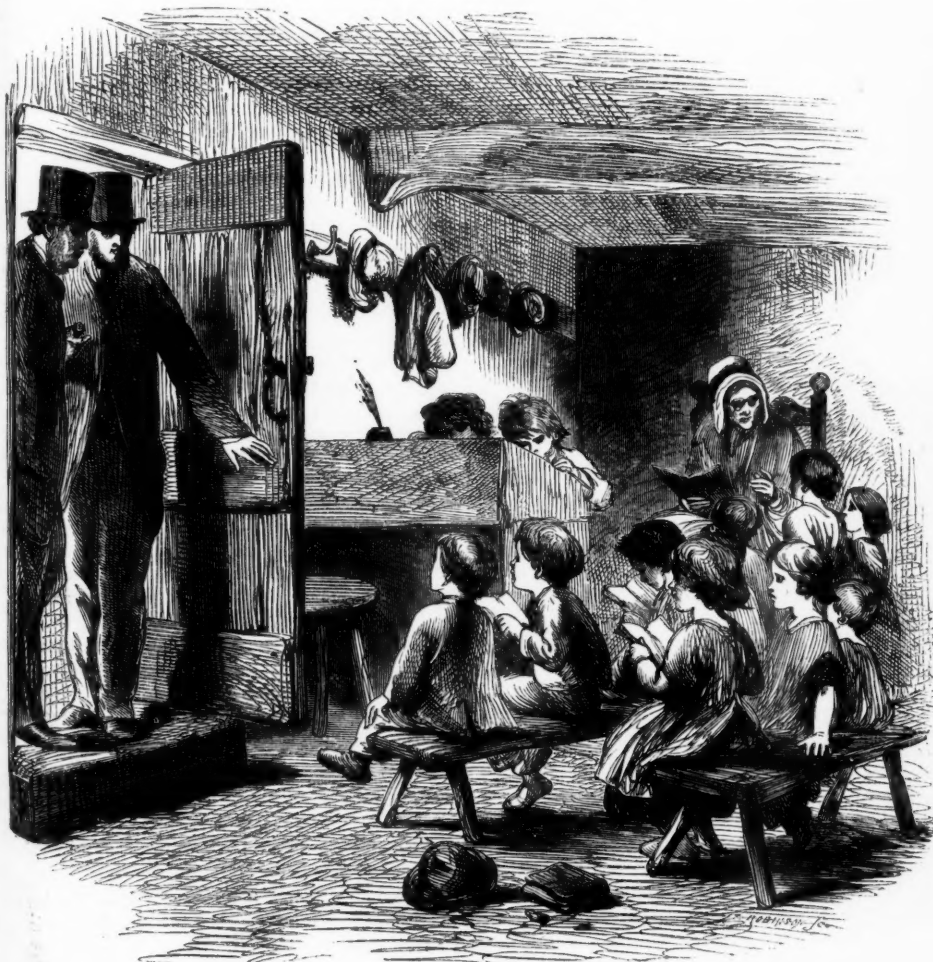


THE LEISURE HOUR

A FAMILY JOURNAL OF INSTRUCTION AND RECREATION.

"BEHOLD IN THESE WHAT LEISURE HOURS DEMAND,—AMUSEMENT AND TRUE KNOWLEDGE HAND IN HAND."—*Cooper.*



VISIT TO THE IRISH VILLAGE SCHOOL.

AN OLD SAILOR'S STORY.

CHAPTER XXXII.—THE EVE OF A DISCOVERY.

ONE morning I walked with my friend Lawrence to the little fishing village of which I have spoken. It consisted of about twenty or thirty cabins irregularly planted near the shore, which at this place formed a little bay; and as it receded from the sea, the ground rose gradually, presenting a pleasant

view of meadow land and cultivated fields, which were rented by the villagers, each of whom had, as I was told, an acre or two to cultivate, and the most thrifty of whom kept a cow. They were thus—thanks to their landlord, Hugh Lawrence—in tolerably comfortable circumstances, and might have been more so, perhaps, but for their general habits of recklessness and occasional dissipation, which he had been unable entirely to eradicate.

The cabins were humble enough, and, to an English eye and taste, would have appeared, as they did to me, very comfortless. Heaps of manure, composed principally of decaying sea-weed and putrid fish, were piled up close to the doors, and scented the air with no delicate perfume; while, withinside, the single dirty smoky living-room was shared between domesticated pigs and their biped owners. Hugh shook his head as he pointed out to me these and other blots on the home scenery.

"I have not been able to amend everything yet, Davy," he said; "and even Mary and her mother, who have ten times more influence than I with our tenants, are obliged to shut their eyes to much that would otherwise be almost unbearable. In course of time, perhaps, we may instil something into the younger people; but the old ones stick to their old customs pertinaciously."

Hugh then began to tell me of the pains his young wife and Mrs. Hayes had taken to enlighten the minds and amend the habits of the villagers, and the opposition they had encountered, especially in regard to a school for the children, which they had attempted to establish, with very little present success. The inhabitants of the village were, with two exceptions, Roman Catholics; and the dread of their children becoming Protestants had operated so powerfully on their minds that but little progress had hitherto been made.

"There is a school, however, and a teacher," he added; "and if you have a fancy that way, we can look in upon it. It is school-time now, and I think you will be interested in the good woman who has undertaken the thankless office."

I expressed my willingness, and added, "I presume she is one of the exceptions you have mentioned."

"Yes; and her husband is the other—poor Smith, my boatswain, as I call him, of whom you have heard me speak. Poor fellow, I doubt whether he will ever be boatswain more."

"Is he so ill?"

"Mary's mother tells me so: she saw him yesterday, and was shocked by the alteration in him. And that is another reason why I should like to call at his cottage. I reproach myself for having neglected him; but I really did not suspect that his illness was so serious."

"I am afraid," said I, "that my presence has banished him partly from your mind, or too much occupied your time. Let us go to the cottage by all means. By the way, Smith is not an Irish name."

"No; nor is my old boatswain an Irishman. He has been in Ireland, however, several years, I believe; though I know very little about him. I found him and his wife living here in rather poor circumstances when I first came to the estate; but he does not choose to be interrogated much about his past life."

"Perhaps he has not much to tell."

"Everybody has plenty to tell who has lived sixty or more years in the world, if he chooses to tell it," remarked my friend; "and I have sometimes fancied there is a mystery about my old boat-

swain and his wife. They are certainly superior to their position, though they are so quiet about it, and even try to conceal it. But it is no business of mine, evidently; and I am not sure that I should have noticed it, if it had not been for Mary, who is very fond of her school-mistress, and has observed a good deal that I should never have suspected. Trust the women for that, Davy."

I can scarcely say why, but this short conversation led me to think of my parents; and for a moment a wild throb of excitement passed through my whole frame. But it subsided as I thought of the improbability of the suspicion which had presented itself; and I even smiled at the fancy of finding my mother a school-teacher to a parcel of half wild Irish children.

Perhaps, however, I should have pursued the subject if at that moment we had not been interrupted by Gorman and Ned Finn, who had been on an excursion in one of the fishermen's battered old boats, which they were now hauling up on the beach. They soon joined us, Ned having a large flat fish in his hand, which he had hooked, I believe, and was about to take up to "The Springs" as an addition to the day's bill of fare. But by my directions he despatched it by the hand of a bare-legged gossoon, that he might attend us in the pleasure-boat after our visit to the school.

It is strange that I remember all these trifling matters so perfectly; but indeed they are vividly impressed on my mind. I can even remember that, as we went along, I picked up a peculiarly shaped pebble, and put it into my pocket as a curiosity.

Well, we proceeded on our stroll—Ned walking a little behind us, and Peter Gorman lounging by our side, and giving us a description of an adventure he had passed through on the preceding day, in hunting out an illicit still some miles away. I paid little attention to this, for I had begun to tire of Peter's interminable stories, in which there was a sufficient amount of self-boasting. But presently my interest was roused.

"Do you know, Mr. Lawrence," said the gauger, "I have sometimes had my suspicions of your immaculate boatswain—old Smith."

"What do you mean, Mr. Gorman?" asked Hugh, rather sternly.

"Oh, I don't mean anything offensive; only he is so uncommon sly, you know."

"Sly?"

"Well, yes: what in the world brought him to such an out of the way place as this? He is not an Irishman, you know."

"Neither am I, nor are you either, Mr. Gorman, and yet we are here, you see."

"Oh, that's different," said the gauger; "we know what brought us here, Mr. Lawrence. But the old fellow won't give any account of himself; and I guess by the cut of his jib that he knows more than he chooses you or I should know about him."

"And what then, Mr. Gorman?"

"Nothing in particular, sir; only I have a notion he knows what smuggling means," replied Peter, with a light laugh.

"I think you are accustomed to see so much of the worst side of human nature, Mr. Gorman," said my friend, quietly, "that you can scarcely believe anything good of any one. But you are mistaken for once; I have heard my old boatswain speak very strongly against smuggling."

"That may be," said the gauger, with one of his peculiar sneering smiles; "but I don't think him any the more honest for that. I beg your pardon, though, Mr. Lawrence," he added apologetically; "I did not mean to offend you. I don't think the worse of anybody for doing a little bit of the contraband, I assure you, though it is my business to prevent it."

We were nearing the cottage while this dialogue was going on. It was at a little distance from the rest of the hamlet, and it stood on a rising ground, somewhat retired from the ordinary pathway, which wound round the bay. I had only twice before been in the village; but I had observed this cottage as exhibiting tokens of care and neatness, to which the other cabins were strangers, though I had observed it only at a distance. Externally, the cottage was similar to those around, consisting of only two rooms; but additions had been made to it in the way of outbuildings and sheds; for, like the rest of the villagers, the boatswain, as I shall call him, had land to cultivate, and live stock to take care of. And I may as well add here, that by superior thrift and economy, and good husbandry, he had brought his very little farm into a state of productiveness which astonished, if it did not raise the envy of his neighbours.

As we drew nearer the cottage, I noticed that the ground in front was fenced in, and formed a very neat flower garden, kept in good order, and that a monthly rose, then in full luxurious bloom, was trained over the doorway; and as the cottage was too small to admit of its single living-room being conveniently used as a school-room, a small wing had been added by Hugh for this purpose.

I had time to see all this, and to mark that the windows in the cottage were open to admit the air, also that they were whole and clean, and that muslin blinds had found their way to at least one of the cottages on my friend's estate, before the hum of child voices fell upon my ear, and Hugh's hand was on the latch of the school-room door.

CHAPTER XXXIII.—THE DISCOVERY.

"MAY we come in, Mrs. Smith?" said my host, in his usual cheery, courteous tones. I did not hear the reply, but I understood its import, and the door being thrown open wide, I followed Hugh into the room.

It was small, but apparently large enough for the purpose for which it was built. Probably there were a dozen small children seated on low forms, with books in their hands, which perhaps they had been conning previous to the interruption; but now the books were unheeded, and the young scholars turned their inquisitive eyes towards the intruders, whispering to one another that it was "the masher and a jontleman, and two more jontlemans outside." At a desk were two or three more advanced pupils, to whom the teacher was, or had been, en-

deavouring to impart some instruction in the intricacies of "summing."

"Don't let us disturb you, Mrs. Smith," continued my friend; "I have taken the liberty of——"

It is of no consequence what more he said. At the first sound of his voice on entering, the teacher looked round, rose from her seat, and stepped lightly towards us. Coming into the shade, out of the full and fierce glare of the summer sun, I saw, for a few seconds, but the outlines of her figure, which was slight, and seemed to be rather tall, though bent. But when I partially regained the use of my eyes, I felt conscious of exposure to the teacher's wild and earnest gaze. Possibly my own countenance underwent some extraordinary sudden change also. At any rate, I am sure I trembled violently, and grasped my friend's arm with such force and tenacity as caused him to start suddenly and turn upon me with surprise, which, as he afterwards told me, changed to extreme alarm as he noticed the rapid working of my features, my white lips and starting eyes.

"Blake, my dear fellow, what ails you?"

I remember his saying that; and I remember nothing more until I felt myself clasped in the teacher's arms—heard a wild, hysterical, shrieking cry, "Davy, Davy—my boy; mine!"—and knew that my poor long-lost mother lay insensible on my breast.

I cannot tell this part of my story very consecutively. I remember much—oh, very much; but nothing distinctly. I can see now, my faithful friend and follower, Ned Finn, rushing in, then out again, and, in the exuberance of his joy, frantically throwing his cap up into the air, and giving a true Sussex "Hip, hip, hip—hooray," three times repeated, to the silent amazement of the ragged urchins gathered round. I can see, also, my true friend Hugh Lawrence, gently relieving me of my precious burden, and calling back my mother to consciousness. I know that he dismissed the school, and sent a message by one of the scholars to "The Springs," which speedily summoned his kind-hearted wife and her mother to the cottage. And I know that presently after that, I was kneeling by my sick father's couch, one hand clasped in his, and the other in my mother's, who knelt by my side. I know that, for some time, we were alone, because Hugh had withdrawn his little party and Ned Finn from the chamber; and that hurried explanations were given and received, which cleared up, as far as could be cleared, the misconceptions which had led to the belief of my death. I remember my poor father (and oh, how greatly he was changed!) asking me with trembling anxiety, if I had anything to do with "the trade—the accursed trade," by which I understood him to mean smuggling; and how fervently he thanked God that I was clear of it. I have some confused remembrance of a broken history of his wanderings, and the events which had led to his removing my mother from her home in my native village, and of their afterwards crossing the Irish sea and settling down in their present obscurity, under a changed name, because the brand of homicide was on him; and

how that weight had pressed upon his soul—ever, ever. All this, I say, and more, very much more, I remember as one remembers a dream when it is passed.

And then our friends were admitted again: and they tried to insist that my poor father should be removed to "The Springs," and that my mother and he should be their guests, so that, by the best medical attendance and the most careful nursing, his health and strength might be, if possible, restored. I need not repeat the arguments which were urged, or those by which they were met. It is enough to say that, though the proposal was declined, it was declined gratefully; and that at last it was decided that the school-room should be hastily fitted up for me and Ned Finn, that I might keep near to my lost and found parents, and that he might be at hand to wait on us all. And so that day passed away.

I must not omit to mention that, a very few minutes after the discovery and identification which I have so hurriedly and imperfectly narrated, Peter Gorman disappeared from among us.

"I did not think the fellow had so much delicacy in his composition," said Hugh, when he found that Peter was gone.

CHAPTER XXXIV.—CLOSING SCENES.

THREE weeks passed away rapidly, and I was at the bedside of my dying father. Already his painful gasping for breath, and his feeble, fluttering pulse, gave token that his last hour was near, very near. My mother sat by him, watching, watching. She knew that the parting moment was at hand; but her strength had not yet given way—that was to follow. My friend Hugh Lawrence was in the outer apartment; he had hurried down to the hamlet early that morning, as had been his custom daily during the last three weeks; and he was waiting for the closing scene. The doctor had left us an hour or two before, confessing his inability to arrest the further progress of death. It was not by old age, (though his patient was not young,) he said; nor was it by acute disease, that my father was laid low. That wound, received so many years ago, had sapped and drained the vital powers. So the doctor said.

The three weeks which had passed so rapidly had been full of painful interest to me; but I will not open afresh the fountains of my sorrow. I will only say that I felt more keenly this second parting from my father than that first one, which I had thought was final. It seemed hard to recover a treasure so unexpectedly, so soon to have it again snatched from the grasp.

* * * * *

I will not recall the circumstances of that dying hour. It is enough to say that my poor father had ceased to breathe—that by the bed stood a little group of silent witnesses—my poor mother resting on my arm, her face hidden in my bosom, weeping bitterly; my good friend Hugh standing by our side and mournfully contemplating the placid countenance of his poor dead boatswain; and Ned Finn, with tears running plentifully down his rugged cheeks, looking piteously on all that remained of

his old commander; when the silence was broken by the sound of wheels, and two or three rough voices outside the darkened window. Then the wheels suddenly stopped; and quick, heavy footsteps were heard in the outer apartment. In a moment, Hugh had glided out of the chamber; and then I heard voices again, my friend's first, low and subdued, and evidently in tones of remonstrance.

"Pho, Pho! This humbug won't do for me, Mr. Lawrence. A clever scheme enough to say the man is dead; but he won't come the old smuggler over me in that fashion. I have got the law on my side; and here's my warrant, if you want to see it; and I don't expect you are going to resist lawful authority, Mr. Lawrence. As to David Blake—a pretty captain he is—he had better try it on, that's all. I wish he would. See if I wouldn't have my revenge of him then."

I heard all this; and there was no mistaking the voice: it was that of Peter Gorman, my old school-boy enemy, who during the three past weeks had been unaccountably missing from the neighbourhood. This absence was explained now. I understood it all in a moment. He had witnessed the meeting between my mother and myself; had remembered the reward offered for my father's apprehension so many years ago; had at once started off to England to obtain the necessary evidences of that proclamation; had returned to obtain a warrant from the nearest magistrate; and, armed with that, and accompanied by a constable, had hastened to apprehend the man on whose head so valuable a price was set. Yes, I understood it all, and could easily guess also that, while cupidity was the mainspring of his vile treachery, it was helped on by feelings of long pent-up revenge against the boy who had beaten him in a school fight. Happily, my mother heard but little, and understood nothing of the temporary confusion; she must indeed have heard the voices as they rose in high dispute and remonstrance and threatenings, without; but her thoughts were with her dead husband before her, and with him alone.

It was well for me that I had, ere this, learned to keep my passions under control. In spite of this, they mounted high for a moment, as the traitor's exulting tones reached my ears; but one glance at my dead father quieted me. Gently disengaging myself from my mother, and placing her on a small couch, I stepped to the door, threw it wide open, and invited the gauger to enter. He did enter with the warrant in his hand, followed by the constable and his assistant.

Never while I live shall I forget the look of baffled cunning and rage which overspread his countenance as he cast a searching glance at the bed, then turned to his pallid assistants, and then dashed the warrant angrily upon the floor.

"Tricked out of it at last!" he uttered, with a terrible oath; and then rushed from the chamber.

* * * * *

I have not much more to tell; and a few sentences will suffice. My father was quietly and peacefully buried in a churchyard some three or four miles from the hamlet. My mother, yielding to the solicitations of my friends, and to my own

earnest wishes, removed to "The Springs," and resided there while I went on my next voyage. Subsequently, I found a home for her in England; and eventually, on retiring from my profession, I took up my abode with her until she died, very full of years. But, until the last year of her existence, we paid an annual visit of some length to my friend's Irish home, and to her husband's and my father's grave.

With regard to other actors in my disjointed and fragmentary story, I have only to say that my old captain, Mr. Phipps, is yet living, hale and strong, considering his age, which is hard upon ninety years; and, from his retirement at (a seaport town of course), looks out upon the world, and bemoans the degeneracy of the sea service of the present day. Steam power has spoiled it for sailors, he says: and when reminded that it has added to the facility and rapidity of transit, he remarks that there was time enough in his young days for the world to do all that was to be done; and he triumphantly asks what you would have more than that?

Hugh Lawrence and his wife have carried out a variety of notable plans on their Irish estate, where they now generally reside with their rather numerous family. And as the prohibition did not extend beyond himself, his elder son became a dashing and successful sailor. His ship now shows a rear-admiral's flag, when he is on board.

Of Peter Gorman I have nothing further to tell, worth recording.

Ned Finn, my old faithful friend and follower, died on board my ship, in the last voyage I ever made, after sending "his humble remembrances" to my mother, his old captain's lady, "as in duty bound." He received honourable burial at sea. Poor Ned!

DULCE DOMUM—BREAKING UP.

PLEASANT recollections are entertained of the first appearance of the "Sketch Book" by Washington Irving, now some forty years ago, and of the zest with which its pages were read, depicting England's homes in their brightest, sunniest, and dearest aspect, while making us acquainted with many a scene and romantic incident in the world beyond the Atlantic. There is a charming chapter in the book, on the old stage-coach at Christmas time, with its three fine rosy-cheeked schoolboys returning home for the holidays in high glee; forming gigantic plans of pleasure, and promising themselves a world of enjoyment during their six weeks' emancipation from the thralldom of book, birch, and pedagogue. Every object connected with home was talked about, down to the very cat, and especially Bantam, a favourite pony, apparently in possession of more virtues than any steed since the days of Bucephalus. How he could trot! how he could canter! how he could leap! Thus the youngsters went on till the spot itself was caught sight of in the distance, when every well-remembered tree, gate, and cottage, was noted; and at last the joyful ejaculation was heard, "There's John! and there's old Carlo! and there's Bantam!"

The fashion of this world passeth away, both with reference to material arrangements and those who adopt them. The stage-coach has vanished from many a high-road along which it rattled for years, with its juvenile passengers at vacation times, and its load of creature-comforts at the season when hospitality is most shown by those who can afford it. Yet still, schools periodically break up, and school-boys travel homeward-bound by train, with exuberant spirits at the thought of joining the loved family circle, and sitting by the fondly recollected fireside of their childhood. In days of yore, when scholastic discipline was a system of rigorous coercion, stripes being administered by the score, and tasks by the dozen, for little or no reason except as a pure expression of authority, or a supposed remedy for a dull understanding, there was special cause for hilarity on such occasions; and it found vent in songs of uproarious jubilation, often chanted in full chorus on the eve of the auspicious day of departure. A specimen is at hand.

"Omne bonè
Sine poenâ
Tempus est ludendi:
Venit hora,
Absque morâ,
Libros deponendi."

"All's well, my brave boys,
Come, let's make a noise,
For we shall be beaten no more;
The vacation is come,
We will now return home,
And fling all our books on the floor.
My brave boys," etc.

Winchester school, the noble foundation of William of Wykeham, has its "Dulce Domum," a vacation chant, the existence of which can be traced back some two centuries; for the music was composed by John Reading, in the reign of Charles II. Nothing certain is known of the origin of this famous song, though commonly referred to a melancholy incident.

In a poem of the last century, entitled "The Influence of the Domestic Attachment with respect to Home," the sad fate of a Winchester scholar is thus described:—

"And see in durance the fast-fading boy
Midst Wykeham's walls his dulcet sorrows heave;
Fled are his fairy dreams of homely joy.
Ah! frowns too chilling, that his soul bereave
Of all that frolic fancy long'd to weave
In his paternal woods! His hands he wrings
In anguish. Yet some balm his sorrows leave
To soothe his fainting spirits, as he sings
And suits to every sigh the sweetly warbling strings.
"Oh! he had notched, unweeting of distress,
The hours of schoolboy toil! Nor irksome flew
The moments—for, each morn, his score was less!
Visions of vacant home yet brighter grew;
When, lo! stern fate obscur'd the blissful view:
Droops his sick heart. And, ah! dear fields (he cries),
Ye bloom no more! Dear native fields, adieu!
'Home, charming home!' still plaintive echo sighs;
And to his parting breath the dulcet murmur dies."

The lines refer to a traditional story, that a Wykehamist youth was detained at the usual time of breaking up, and chained to a tree or pillar, for some offence to the master, when he gave expression to his longings for home in a Latin poem, and died broken-hearted before his companions returned. There are six stanzas, with a chorus, which is repeated at the end of every verse. The opening may be given.

"Concinamus, O sodales!
Eja! quid silemus?
Nobile canticum!
Dulce melos, domum!
Dulce domum, resonemus.

CHORUS.

"Domum, domum, dulce domum!
Domum, domum, dulce domum!
Dulce, dulce, dulce domum!
Dulce domum, resonemus.

"Appropinquat ecce! felix
Hora gaudiorum,
Post grave tedium
Advenit omnium
Meta petita laborum.

Domum, domum," etc.

Many translations have appeared, but it is scarcely possible to do justice to the original in an English version. The following, by an anonymous hand, expresses as well as any other its sense and spirit.

"Sing a sweet melodious measure,
Waft enchanting lays around;
Home! a theme replete with pleasure!
Home! a grateful theme, resound!

CHORUS.

"Home, sweet home! an ample treasure:
Home with every blessing crown'd!
Home! perpetual source of pleasure!
Home! a noble strain resound!

"Lo! the joyful hour advances,
Happy season of delight!
Festal songs, and festal dances,
All our tedious toil requite.
Home, sweet home, etc.

"Leave, my wearied muse, thy learning,
Leave thy task, so hard to bear;
Leave thy labour, ease returning,
Leave my bosom, Oh! my care.
Home, sweet home, etc.

"See the year, the meadow, smiling;
Let us then a smile display;
Rural sports, our pain beguiling,
Rural pastimes call away.
Home, sweet home, etc.

"Now the swallow seeks her dwelling,
And no longer loves to roam;
Her example thus impelling,
Let us seek our native home.
Home, sweet home, etc.

"Let our men and steeds assemble,
Panting for the wide champaign;
Let the ground beneath us tremble,
While we scour along the plain.
Home, sweet home, etc.

"Oh! what raptures, oh! what blisses,
When we gain the lovely gate!
Mother's arms, and mother's kisses,
There our blest arrival wait.
Home, sweet home, etc.

"Greet our household-gods with singing,
Send, O Lucifer, thy ray;
Why should light, so slowly springing,
All our promised joys delay?
Home, sweet home," etc.

The song is now publicly sung by the scholars and choristers in procession, aided by a band of music, previous to the summer holidays. One of the laws of the school enjoins, that "no one is to be excused in staying at home beyond the time of the vacation," as if its author had a consciousness that the discipline then enforced was directly calculated to repel; and as if a memorial of its irksomeness, a play-day, here retains the name of a "remedy." The term occurs in the same sense in the statutes of Paul's and some other schools.

It was at Winchester, in the grammar-school, that William of Wykeham received his early education. Raised to the bishopric, he endowed a college at Oxford for the special benefit of natives of his diocese, and then originated a collegiate institution in the episcopal city, to furnish preparatory training for the university. It consisted of a warden and ten priests, who were perpetual fellows; a master and second master, with seventy scholars; three chaplains, three inferior clerks, and sixteen choristers. There is a meaning in these numbers which does not appear upon the surface. The warden and ten priests were intended to represent the college of the apostles, Judas Iscariot being omitted; the two masters and seventy scholars denoted the seventy-two disciples; the three chaplains and three clerks symbolized the six faithful deacons; and the sixteen choristers commemorated the four greater and the twelve lesser prophets. In like manner, Dean Colet made provision for a hundred and fifty-three scholars at St. Paul's School, in allusion to the "hundred and fifty and three fishes" which Simon Peter brought to land, "yet was not the net broken."

Besides the scholars on the foundation, who are under the care of the warden, there is a larger number of gentlemen commoners, of whom the head master has the charge, and who have a quadrangle and hall of their own. The schoolroom is a spacious apartment, with some admonitory Latin inscriptions at the south end, to which appropriate emblems are attached, as follows:—

Aut Disce. The emblem is a mitre and crosier as the expected Either learn, reward of learning.

Aut Discede. An ink-horn to sign, and a sword to enforce the Or depart hence. order of expulsion.

Manet Sors Tertia Cadi.

Or in the third place be flogged. A scourge.

Examiners come from Oxford, known as the Senior *Poser* and Junior *Poser*, to select two of the foundation scholars for the university. The examination over, and election made, Dulce Domum is sung, and the school breaks up.

THE GREAT TUNNEL UNDER THE ALPS.

BETWEEN Chambery and Susa runs the pass of the Mont Cenis. The easiest of all the Alpine passes, it is also the most useful; hundreds of travellers of all conditions pass it every day, from the don, riding "extra post," down to the humble tramp; it is computed that more than 120,000 cross it in the course of a year. But though the road is excellent, and the scenery surrounding it for the most part very beautiful, every one finds it excessively tedious. More than eleven years ago, a railway was projected to cross the pass, with a tunnel to escape the summit; but years passed before the line was commenced, and it was only in September, 1857, that the tunnel works were opened by the King of Sardinia. Even now, it will be long before Victor Emanuel's railway supersedes Napoleon's road; for, until the tunnel is completed, the worst part of the road must be passed by diligence.

We had heard all kinds of rumours about this tunnel, but could not learn the truth; some said

that the machine used for boring was so successful that it cut the rock faster than the workmen could remove it; some, that it was a total failure and would not work at all. There was also the usual tunnel rumour about water breaking in and stopping all progress. Few people among those we questioned knew anything about it, and when any information was obtained it was generally the contrary of what we had heard before. So we packed our knapsacks and went straight off, touching at Chambéry for introductions to the engineers. The third night after leaving London we got to St. Jean de Maurienne. Modane was sixteen miles on; we found it and the tunnel mouth, but the tunnelling machine, of which we were in search? not exactly. "No," said the engineer, "if you want to see that, you must go to Bardonnèche; but it won't be put up at this end for many months." On inquiry we found that it would take longer to reach it than we had at our disposal, so we adjourned our visit to another year.

The clocks had just struck twelve, one night, in August last, when the diligence, conveying myself, friend G—— and a drunken conducteur, crawled into the village of Oulx. The keeper of the inn at which we stopped, in answer to our request for beds said, with true Savoyard politeness, "You can't stop here: the house is full; all the others are shut; you better go about your business." We took his advice, and found an oat-field, and more repose in it than we should in his lively beds, with the thermometer at 75°. In the morning we were aroused by the noise of a native working close at hand; but so completely were we hidden by the oats that we were not perceived. Rising both at the same moment, and dropping off the blanket bags in which we had slept, it appeared to him as if we had sprung out of the ground. The tableau was striking: he gazed at us aghast for a moment; then, looking round in a nervous twitching manner, he dropped his spade and bolted, amidst our hearty shouts of laughter.

From Oulx to Bardonnèche was a very pretty six miles up the Val di Dora. After passing through a narrow gorge, in which the Dora was rushing madly down, we came upon the village and all the clang and noise of the tunnel works very suddenly. In front, at the foot of a steep mountain, were ranges of buildings, workshops, offices, and lodgings; on the right a small black dot, half a mile up a narrow valley, was the tunnel mouth, and on the left it opened out into a glorious amphitheatre, surrounded by snowy-topped mountains, whose savage, jagged peaks were in great contrast with the meadow slopes, everywhere covered with noble crops of corn below, and the quiet village which lay immediately underneath, half concealed by mist, whose towers were just catching the morning sun. Some five or six valleys opened away in various directions; but it was to that before us we hastened; for, although a long way off, a strange banging noise caught our ears, which we were right in thinking was caused by the wonderful machine which had been the sole cause of our pilgrimage. We soon found M. Sommeiller, the inventor of it, and presented our letter; and never were strangers more kindly or attentively received. "You are just in time," said he; "come here;" and we entered a large building from which

the strange noise had proceeded, and there, we were standing before a machine which is one of the most wonderful that has ever been invented.

"We are having some trials with a new kind of borer," said our courteous conductor; "see, here it is." And there, fixed in a square frame, was a narrow cylinder, connected with a few simple-looking pipes and stopcocks—nothing very wonderful to look at. At about five feet in front of the machine was a great block of rock, upon which the experiments were being made; it was absolutely riddled by the borer; one hundred and eight holes, varying from one inch to four and a half in diameter, and averaging a yard in depth, pierced it in all directions. At a word from the engineer the machine was set in motion; now a borer darts out of the cylinder like a flash of lightning or the tongue of a serpent, and goes with a crash against a new part of the rock, chipping out several fragments at a blow; but quick as it was advanced it is withdrawn; bang, bang, it goes again in quick succession, faster than the eye can follow it—bang, bang, with a noise like a sudden crash on a gong. We gazed in silent astonishment; in ten seconds the head of the borer had eaten itself a hole; in a minute it had all but disappeared; in twelve it had drilled a hole nearly a yard deep, in rock harder than the average, as clean as a carpenter could in a piece of wood. The borer not only moved backwards and forwards but was so arranged that it advanced as the hole grew deeper, and, more wonderful still, it had a second motion, not only advancing and retreating, but also steadily turning round and round. A jet of water was also projected with great power into the hole all the time, answering the double purpose of cooling the borer and assisting the excavation.

M. Sommeiller was evidently amused at the astonishment of *les Anglais*, and again urged to the engineer to put on—not more steam, but more air. If we were astonished before, we were doubly so now; the borer was projected backwards and forwards so fast that the bangs caused by the blows seemed to form a continuous rattle. We inquired the number of blows which it made per minute, and were told that the ordinary rate was one hundred and eighty to two hundred; "but," said M. Sommeiller, "it is much faster now; stay, I will calculate;" and we found that it was working at the astonishing rate of *three hundred and forty strokes per minute*, or nearly one half as fast again as the piston of an ordinary express locomotive, when moving sixty miles per hour!



Many forms of borers have been tried, and fresh ones are being invented. The most recent and the best, discovered at present, has a Z shaped head, as we show in the woodcut. The chief wonder of the machine is the means by which it is worked—not by steam, but by air compressed by hydraulic power. There is hardly a steam-engine in the works. Everything is done by water-power; it creates the blasts for the forges, wields immense hammers, drives iron-planing and drilling machines as effectually as any engine, and at a fraction of the cost. In an adjoining house

were the compressors and air reservoirs, ten in number, of which but five are used, and the remainder kept as a reserve. Ponderous castings they are, apparently massive enough to stand any pressure; but it is not so: not long ago one burst, whose fragments were hurled in all directions, clearing away a thick brick wall which was in the way, with the greatest ease. From these reservoirs, in which the air is stored at a pressure of 62 lbs. per square inch, lead the pipes conveying the same to the boring machine in the tunnel; and, as we walked by their side to the mouth, it required no telling to see the immense nature of the work. The mouth, though 26 feet wide by 19½ high, was but a dot in the mountain side, whose precipices rose above it for 3000 feet nearly perpendicularly, totally precluding the possibility of shafts, and consequently of commencing the tunnel at more than two points at once. For nearly 40,000 feet the tunnel will have to be excavated before arriving at Modane, through strata of the most trying character. At Bardonnèche it is calcareous schist, with seams of quartz plentifully distributed; at the other end a sandstone mixed with quartz, to commence upon; then harder sandstone, and at present limestone: none of these will stand by themselves, and the whole has necessarily been lined with masonry, vastly increasing the expense of the work.

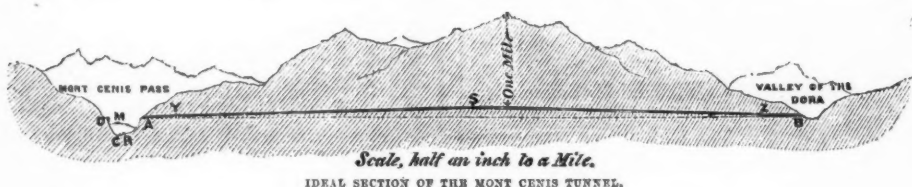
We hastened through the 2100 feet completed, in order to be at the end when some blasts were fired. In all this a double line of rails were laid, and the tunnel did not differ from any other. Some sixty men were engaged at the termination in enlarging the drift made by the machine; for it is only a pioneer, and does not even make all the holes for blasting, much less excavate the whole of the rock, as has been repeatedly stated in our newspapers. In all tunnelling, and particularly through rock, the chief difficulty and danger is in making the first drift; this our machine does about nine feet square; it is afterwards increased by the ordinary means to its proper dimensions. We again went forwards for 500 feet through this narrow way, presently passed "the machine," and were stopped by a strong iron-bound shield, which is hung from the ceiling when blasts are fired, to prevent erratic blocks striking the workmen; a second shield was twelve feet in advance. We had hardly waited a minute among the workmen before we were joined by two others, who had been intrusted with the delicate office of firing the matches, and very soon eight reports gave us leave to enter. The shields were hoisted up, and a dense cloud of smoke rushed out; but before reaching chaos at the end, the whole had vanished, being driven forcibly out by the compressed air which was turned on. The atmosphere here, owing to the blast of compressed air, at more

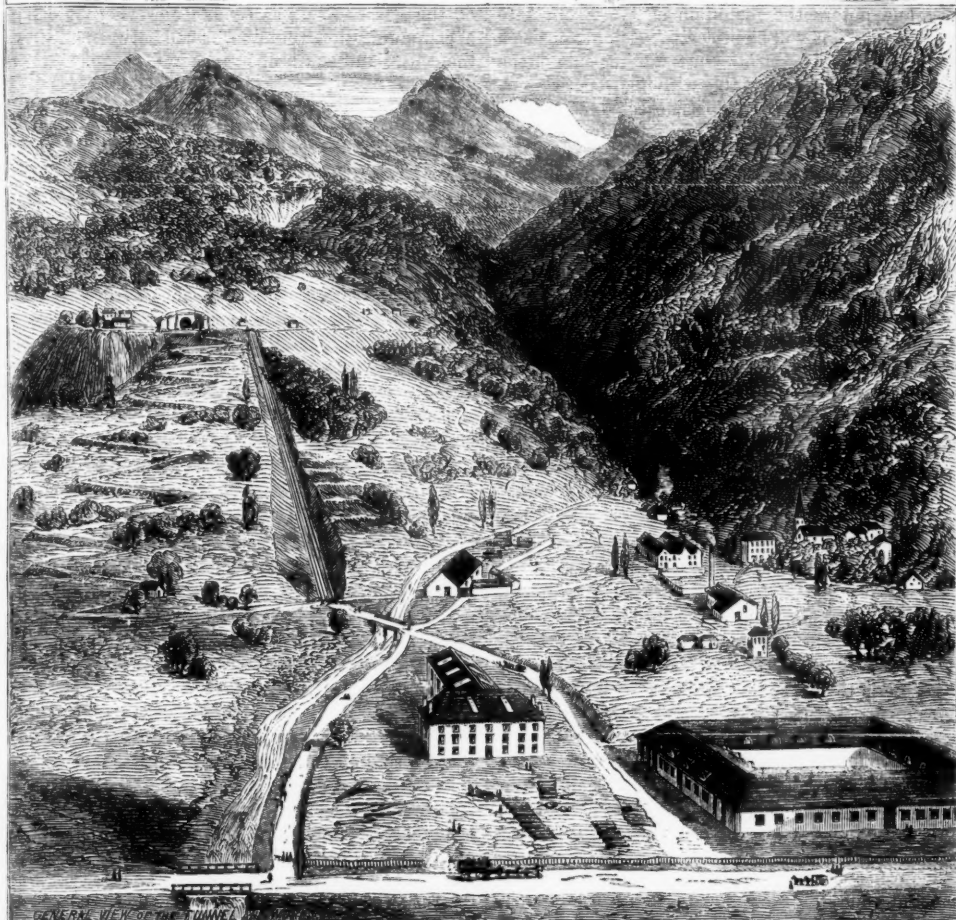
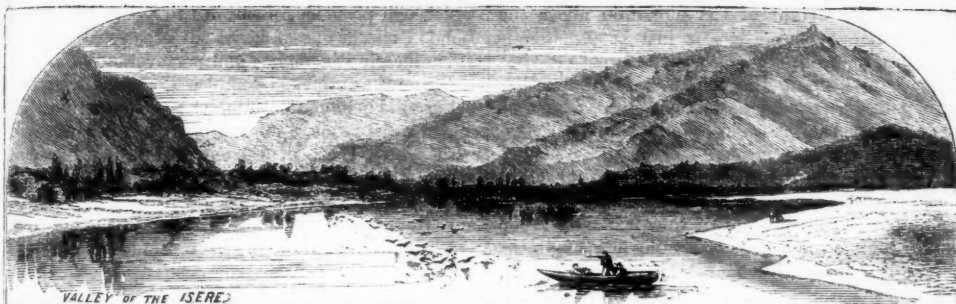
than half a mile from the mouth, was just as pure, and very much cooler than outside. The rationale of this has been well explained in a former number of "The Leisure Hour." (Subalpine Railways, No. 375.) As heat is evolved when air is compressed, so it is absorbed when, by expansion, it returns to its former condition. The application of this simple scientific fact has been already of great use, and will always furnish the tunnel with a stream of pure and cool air. After the blasts have been fired, the *débris* is cleared away in the usual manner, the machine retreating on its special tramway to allow trucks to pass to the end. Immediately it is cleared, the machine is again fixed in position to commence afresh.

Next morning we returned to see it at work. Huge coils of pipes (looking like frightful slimy serpents) of compressed air and water, lay about in seeming disorder. Eight of the cylinders already described were fixed in one massive frame, darting out their borers in all directions. Squeezed in and around it were upwards of twenty men, in some of the most extraordinary positions the human body is capable of assuming. Boys were perched on the top with long tin cans, constantly oiling the parts. Now one of the borers would be stopped to be fixed in a fresh position; men, in waterproof, would dodge under the other forked tongues to move it, getting in for small cascades of water which was being squirted into the holes. Foremen were shrieking unintelligible orders, and others vainly trying to understand them. The noise of eight borers—bang, bang, being reverberated by the sides of the rock, was terrific. But, above all the ceaseless rattle and babel could be heard the roaring of the air, as it rushed out to keep up the supply. All was disorder, and yet order: it was the triumph of order in the midst of confusion.

We had done our work; we had seen the machine; saw it was *not* a myth. There was no doubt about it; it did cut holes in the rock, sometimes fifteen times as fast as the workmen, and never, even under the most unfavourable circumstances, less than six or seven times as fast. It did not occupy in the tunnel more than twenty minutes on an average, to cut a hole a yard in depth. But the whole amount excavated at this end was not great. It had taken 450 workmen four years to finish 2830 feet; supposing they progressed at the same rate at Modane, it would take just twenty-four years to finish it; but it is hoped that in four years more the work will be completed. From Bardonnèche to Modane by the railway will be 7½ miles, but by the present route over the mountain, at least fourteen.

The diagram which is subjoined explains a point of considerable interest at Modane. It has been already remarked that shafts were an impossibility,





owing to the height of the mountain above the tunnel; in one place there is just 1600 metres—one mile—rising over it. As shafts of vital importance in keeping the course straight, another method has been adopted in their stead, which, so far as it goes, has the merit of great simplicity combined with perfect security.

The railway, in coming up the pass of the Mont Cenis, keeps to the right of the road marked C, until reaching the tunnel mouth; this it passes, then crosses the road and goes two miles higher up the valley; turns round Modane, which is marked M, and returns parallel with itself, but at a much higher level, and enters the mountain at A. From A to the summit, S, it will be perfectly straight, but at a gradient of 23 in 1000. On the other side of the valley, in a line corresponding with its proper course, a little observatory, O, has been erected, somewhat lower than the mouth, to allow for this gradient. It will be evident at once, that so long as the excavation is made in the proper direction, this observatory will be always visible through the mouth; but vary never so little to the right or to the left, or up or down, and you will lose sight of it.

The letter Y on the section, (which has been constructed from the data supplied by the engineers, but cannot pretend to absolute correctness,) marks the amount finished at Modane, and Z the same at Bardonnèche; but beyond each, the first drift is formed for a considerable distance.

Our page illustration shows the works at Modane in the centre. The situation of the tunnel mouth, hundreds of feet above the Mont Cenis road, which just appears at the bottom, is at once perceived. On the left of it is the immense embankment, in some parts as high as the Monument, over which the railway will run to Modane. All the buildings seen in the engraving have been built expressly for the works; the T shaped one lodges some of the workmen; the quadrangle is a repairing shop. The cutting leading downwards is a tramway up which materials are hauled for the tunnel. The powder magazine is to the left of the mouth, on the commencement of the embankment. Besides these, there are many which could not be included—buildings with immense water-wheels, to compress the air, and others with the compressions as at Bardonnèche; the boring machinery cannot, however, be at work at this end before the commencement of next year.

The other views are taken from among the many beautiful points on the railway. S. Jean de Maurienne is the terminus on the French side; the river Isore, which is crossed, has at the point from which this view is taken, (near S. Pieire d'Albigni,) the appearance of a lake more than a river; the Château de Miolans is one of a score of castles, most of which are steeped in traditions and romantic tales.

The estimated cost of such a work as this is of course not to be depended upon; but from the amount expended at present, it appears that it will not much exceed the average of our own, and be very far behind the extravagant expenditure of the Thames Tunnel with us, and that gigantic swindle the Hoosac, with our cousins in the United States. Everybody must wish success to the Cenis tunnel,

which will place Turin within thirty-three hours of London, and be one of, if not the greatest, triumphs of engineering ingenuity and perseverance.

When the tunnel is completed, an immense impetus will be given to commerce and communication in many directions. When Upper Italy is connected with North Western Europe, railways will soon spread over the Italian Peninsula. An important line is already authorised between Bologna, Ancona, and Taranto, which would form part of the shortest overland route to India. Nor would the impulse be confined to railway works. The French have already a project for prolonging the imperial road of the Basses Alpes as far as Coni, whereby a line of communication would be formed between all Italy, the centre and south of France and Spain.

A TRUE STORY OF THE GREAT FRITZ OF PRUSSIA.

MORE than one eminent English writer has undertaken the task of giving to the public a true delineation of the character of Frederick the Great of Prussia. Yet, not one of them has escaped censure, for having evinced either partiality to, or prejudice against, that remarkable man, who, though so many years removed from the world's stage, still retains so much of the prestige with which he was invested during life. Nor can human judgment well weigh the aggravating or palliating circumstances which secretly ruled his actions, or assign to the actors in the scenes which preceded Frederick's entrance on public life, their due share in forming the sternly sharp, salient points, the deep, dark shadows, which lowered and disfigured his personal character, even while his heroic perseverance amid overwhelming difficulties, his total abnegation of self, and disdainful confronting of individual danger and privation, chained victory to his chariot wheels, and not only then made, but still makes, Frederick the Great the worshipped idol of the Prussian nation.

But amid all his harshness, his apparent delight in tyrannous acts, which might suggest the thought that he sought to revenge himself for his known privation of domestic happiness, by wantonly trampling on the softer feelings of others, there yet occur occasional traits of a high and chivalrous generosity in Frederick the Great's history, which warrant the conclusion that, under another training than that of his weak, cruel, and hypocritical father, he might neither have been the heartless brother, the pitiless husband, nor the unwearied disseminator of Voltairean infidelity, by which he inflicted an injury on his people, for which all his acquisition of territory, and world-wide fame, were but poor indemnifications.

One such redeeming trait is presented to us in the following anecdote, furnished by Van Horn, a German author of established reputation.

Lieutenant-Colonel Kraft (let us call him), whose regiment had been disbanded at the conclusion of the Seven Years' War, lived in Berlin on a small pension, or, to speak more correctly—as the man had a large family—sustained a bare existence in

the extremest penury. Though a brave man, and an able officer, Lieutenant-Colonel Kraft understood not the art of putting himself forward, and equally little did he possess the talent of eking out his slender income by any remunerative occupation. When, therefore, morning after morning, "bread, bread," was chimed out in various cadence by seven young voices, a sword ran through the bosom of the brave soldier, who felt in his inmost soul how much easier it were to face the enemy than his hungry children, when the cupboard and purse were alike empty.

An application to the king was the most natural mode through which to seek assistance; but "old Fritz," as the Prussian monarch was commonly styled in the army, was, unhappily, well known for two peculiarities: first, a temper of such iron unforgiveness, that, if he had taken offence at any one, that man's career was closed—he was never employed again; and second, a memory of such tenacity, that not a hope existed of entrapping him into forgetfulness. No sooner did the offender come before him, either personally or by name, than every circumstance which had excited the monarch's displeasure stood revealed, in all the freshness of their first colouring, on the tablet of his memory. Now, unfortunately, poor Lieutenant-Colonel Kraft had on one occasion been guilty of some strategical error, which drew upon him the king's displeasure at the time, and still weighed heavily in the scale against him.

We all have our faults—kings no less than other mortals, only, unhappily, *their* faults, and even their mistakes, extend farther, and press heavier, than those of other men. But what is worst, the king's displeasure seldom fails to draw along with it the disfavour of his courtiers, and seldom is one among them found who can discover any merit in him "whom the king delighteth not to honour." And by natural sequence, the pension or half-pay allowance* of Lieutenant-Colonel Kraft was the very lowest his rank would permit. It did not, and could not, suffice to feed and clothe his family, and yet he was not himself conscious of having committed any breach of duty; his offence amounted, at the utmost, to an error of judgment. The poor depressed man, therefore, sent in petition after petition, in which his state of abject misery was placed in the strongest light: but all remained unanswered. Day after day did he place himself in the royal ante-chamber, and solicit an audience; the king would not hear of him; nay, he one day got into a towering passion when the officer in waiting ventured to utter the petitioner's name in the royal presence.

Embittered in spirit by repeated disappointment, and a keen sense of injustice, the unfortunate Lieutenant-Colonel became desperate, and a feeling of deep hostility to his sovereign took possession of his heart.

But, stubbornly obstinate as "Old Fritz" unquestionably was, in holding fast any opinion he had once taken up, he was yet not inaccessible to reason, when *time, place, and person* happily conspired to

obtain his ear; and once convinced, he was ready to confess his convictions.

Now it so happened that Lieutenant-Colonel Kraft could still boast, even in his fallen fortunes, that rarest of blessings, a courageous friend in the king's court, who, one day, seizing a favourable moment, stated to the king, frankly and freely, as became a soldier, (one such as "Old Fritz" in his heart dearly loved,) the position of Lieutenant-Colonel Kraft—allowing, to be sure, that he was impetuous, hot-blooded, and, it might be, rashly inconsiderate, but asserting at the same time, that he was, notwithstanding, a *right-hearted* fellow, a good husband, a fond father, and an able officer to boot, of which he brought forward many incontrovertible proofs. The king listened; the adduced facts brought conviction, and he royally resolved to make amends to the old officer for the injustice he had suffered. But before the king's kind intentions could be carried out, an event occurred which drove the intended reparation clean out of his head.

One morning the corners of every street in Berlin were found stuck over with placards, breathing the most venomous abuse of the king, and surpassing in malignity all that had hitherto been written against his Majesty, which, to say truth, had not been little. And though, over former lampoons, Old Fritz had been known to laugh, and even give orders to let the "filthy rags" hang on, in order to show his people how secure he felt in their good opinion, he was put out of all patience by this new attack, and, in a transport of rage, ordered a reward of fifty thaler to be offered to whoever should discover the offender.

It has already been stated that the contemptuous disregard shown to his repeated petitions had reduced Lieutenant-Colonel Kraft to despair. His excellent and most beloved wife had sickened from grief and want; his children were famishing; and the sight of their helpless, hopeless misery, drove the high-spirited, somewhat choleric man, to distraction. Under the influence of that "wrath of man which bringeth a snare," Lieutenant-Colonel Kraft had penned this abusive placard, and himself stuck it up on the walls under the cloud of night. He did this in the full persuasion that the daring insolence of its style would insure the offer of a large reward for the discovery of its author, resolving firmly at the same time to be his own denunciator, should it even cost him his head, and by thus securing the offered reward, rescue his family from impending death by famine, and confidently relying on the public pity being effectually interposed for the relief of his wife and children, when he should have paid the penalty of his crime; if they could only be saved, his sole remaining object in life would be attained; for himself, it had no longer any value.

It was a fearful resolve: which nothing but despair could have suggested, and nothing but the frantic conviction of hopeless ruin preying upon one who "could not dig, and would not beg," could have carried through. No sooner, therefore, did the desperate libeller learn that fifty dollars were within his reach, than, donning his last remaining

* On the Continent, then an arbitrary, not a legal, provision.

patched, faded, and threadbare uniform, he hastened to the palace, and announced his errand to be the revelation—but only to the king himself—of the name of the writer of the rubblish placard.

[To be continued.]

FIRE-IRONS.

THE fire-irons—the humble shovel, tongs, and poker—are nowhere seen in such perfection as at the firesides of the British people. Other peoples, indeed, make pretensions to these our peculiar penates, but you may look in vain throughout Europe, beyond the limits of the shores of our island, for the real thing. In northern countries, where the fuel is wood, either green or charred, and the heat has to be painfully economized in stoves, which bake the air till it is unfit for human respiration, there is indeed little need for fire-irons—a hook to rake out the ashes when the stove becomes choked with them, being all that is necessary. Your Laplander, who cleaves the drift-wood with his axe, burns it with dried sea-weed, and smoke-dries his family in a chimneyless chamber, would not know what to make of the long-legged tongs; and the Russian serf, who makes up the family bed on the top of the family oven, would be as much puzzled to conjecture their use. Among our allies across the Dover Channel, fire-irons are, it is true, plentiful enough; but it is only lately, and very partially, that they have even there assumed anything like respectable proportions. Go into a French boarding-house, even in a respectable or fashionable quarter of Paris, and what do you see lying within the fender, in place of the brilliant instruments which are accustomed to greet you on your own hearth? There is a poker, if you like to call it one, it is true; but you would rather suppose it, if it occupied any other position, to be the stray bar of a cage, or the fragment of a stair-rod. There is a shovel, but, as you look at it, you think of the gravy-spoon, with the bowl beaten out flat, or trodden so by accident; and there are the tongs, if tongs they can be called, which are not much larger than those you are accustomed to see at home in your sugar-basins, and, like them, have their grippers kept asunder by a spring, which must be compressed by the hand when used. Such are the native French fire-irons; and, to say the truth, they are very well adapted to the wants of a French household, where the coal used is generally charcoal, in lumps of about two inches in diameter, and rather more than double that in length. Since the new commercial relations, however, British coal has been finding its way to Gallic hearths, and the fire-irons are gradually asserting themselves in a more dignified manner.

Among ourselves, universal as they are, the fire-irons are anything but an ancient institution. The feudal ages knew nothing about them. The monks had jolly fires in their monasteries and cosy seclusions, but they poked them with brands, not with steel pokers. The burly barons, the belted knights, the men-at-arms, who “drank the red wine through the helmet barred,” round the blazing faggots, piled within the heavy dogs of the wide hearth, had no need of the “toys” of Birmingham.

There is no mention of them in our early literature—no allusion to them in old Chaucer, in Spenser—even in Shakespeare, who brought everything within the compass of his observation. The fact is, that fire-irons may be said to have been born of the “black diamonds,” their manufacture and introduction to general use being consequent on the adoption of coal for fuel, when the woods and forests were no longer sufficient for the demand. The substitution of coal for wood, as fuel, was of course very gradual, the coal coming into use first in the districts where it was dug, then in those places whither it could be carried by sea, and lastly, in the more inland districts, which could be reached only by land carriage. It took several centuries to effect this change in our domestic habits, and it was not until canals had been dug, and railways had intersected the land, that it could be said to be complete—if, indeed, that much can be said even now, seeing that, in many places where railways have not yet carried cheap coal, wood and peat and hoarded sea-weed are still the fuel of the lower and poorer classes.

Among the triple alliance that guards the hearth, the poker stands pre-eminent. It is *the* fire-iron *par excellence*, and, according to universal consent, requires the most dexterous skill in its management. It has been averred, with some show of reason, that a man's character may be predicated by his management of this domestic weapon; though it is hinted that his conduct ought in fairness to be watched under the very differing circumstances of his poking his own fire, or poking that of his neighbour, or, say, the fire of his landlord at an inn. Thus, there is the cautious, gingerly poking of the penurious man, who regards fire, even in the parlour grate, as the devouring element, and would fain check its ravages upon his property; there is the bold, masterly, free-handed poking of the generous-hearted man, who will have a cheerful blaze at any price, and who loves the crackling fire as a genial friend and companion; there is the knowing poking of the man of science, who inserts the weapon at the right spot, to create an enduring and smoke-consuming flame, because he knows to a nicety how to apportion the draught to the fuel, so as to get the greatest amount of heat out of it, at the smallest expense; there is the ignorant poking of the man who knows nothing about it, and who keeps poking on until he has poked the fire out, and has to ring the bell for the servant to come and light it again; and there is the reckless poking of the passionate man, who furiously stabs the fire, as if it were a deadly enemy, instead of a friend, and nothing less than the life of it would satisfy him, while the fragments of coal and showers of sparks fly about the room in all directions; in short, there is no end to the variations in the methods of fire-poking, though there must be an end to our enumeration of them.

What is rather curious in this interesting business of fire-poking is the singular fact, that neither you nor I, nor anybody else, ever saw the fire poked half so cleverly by any one else, as we could do it ourselves—never in a single instance in our lives. We always see the blunder which the

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poking person is committing, and can foretell the disagreeable results of it, and should never do the thing so stupidly ourselves. What is the philosophy of this strange fact? Why is it that we are never satisfied with another person's fire-poking? Is it mere conceit on our part? or is it something that lies deeper? We leave the question to the consideration of stokers and pokers at large.

There is a tenderness on the subject of poking in many households. According to the current sentiment, you should not venture to poke your friend's fire until you have known him seven years; you may borrow a hundred pounds of him on the strength of a week's intimacy, or less; but to handle his poker—that implies a confidence on his part in your tact and prudence, not to be suddenly attained. This sentiment is so well recognised, that we sometimes hear a man whose fingers have been itching for the poker, apologizing as he grasps it, in some such phrase as, "I trust I have known you long enough;" and we have noted that, however courteous the response may be as to mere words, they are seldom or never very graciously uttered. According to the dictum of an aged friend, the freedom of the poker should not be granted lightly; but, having regard to the brevity of human friendships in general, he is of opinion that when it has been earned by seven years of spotless amity, it is as worthy of being presented in a golden box, as the freedom of any corporation on the face of the earth. This venerable mentor further remarks, that when a friend so privileged has poked your fire, it is not doing the handsome thing by him to take up the poker directly he has laid it down, and touch up his performance. You *may* be the better artist—of course you are—but it is ungenerous to brag in so practical a way.

Much has been said, and written too, upon the subject of the pokers that should be preferred in a house; the gist of these dissertations seems to be, that when you use the poker yourself, it may and should be light and handy, but that, when used by other people, the more bulky and ponderous it is, the better. Take, for example, the advice given by Dr. Trusler, who at the age of eighty-five wrote a work on domestic management, and who, one would think, must have known by that time something of fire-irons. "Let your kitchen poker," says he, "weigh at least twenty pounds, so that the cook may not use it oftener than is necessary, poking your coals to waste, which she will not do if she have to take both hands to it. Mine weighs twenty-four pounds, and saves me a ton of coal every year." There's a wrinkle in housekeeping for you! Observe, the benignant patriarch says nothing at all about the parlour poker; that may be, as light as you like; you may even use a "tickler," which is a Lilliputian poker, about seventeen inches long, and so light that a child may dandle it for the hour together.

If you are privileged to poke in a friend's drawing-room, be sure that in doing so you make use of the right instrument. It may be that the fire-irons which lie in state in the fender are too well polished ever to be used. You must look out for "tickler," which you will find standing bolt

upright in a corner, and do the business with him, leaving the radiant polish of the poker proper unsoiled by your warm hand.

We fear the poker is running away with us, and leaving the tongs and shovel in the lurch; but we must say one word more about him, before we let him go. To a certain class of artists, whose works were once in vogue, the poker, when red-hot, stood in the place of pencils, brushes, and palette, of colours, oils, megilps, and vehicles of all kinds. Their performances were designated by the name of poker paintings, and some of them were of rare excellence. They were executed in the following manner: instead of canvass, a board of beech or willow wood was planed perfectly smooth, and upon this the outline was drawn; the poker was then heated in the fire; the deep tints and lines were burnt in by actual contact, and the softer gradations of shades were scorched in by approximating the hot metal to the surface and retaining it there till the desired effect was produced. These pictures are said to be imperishable, save by fire or the slow decay of the woody fibre. We have seen some of them sold, in days gone by, for twenty guineas each, under the hammer. Think of earning twenty guineas with a red-hot poker!

After all, the best thing about fire-irons are the delightful family associations connected with them. They are the silent witnesses of much of our home education, and of the delight which we participate round the social hearth. They are part and parcel of our firesides, which would not be complete without them, and as such are commingled with all our fireside memories and enjoyments.

HAVILDAR RAMDOO.

A FALSEHOOD AND ITS CONSEQUENCES.

ANY one at all conversant with Eastern nations and their habits must be struck with their want of veracity, not only in little things but in great. But it is sad, and only too true, that Eastern nations are too prone to prevaricate. In fact, if by doing so they gain their points, they rather glory in it. The following narrative shows what lamentable disasters resulted simply from a want of telling the truth.

In a regiment of native infantry in India was a man who had been promoted out of another regiment on account of gallant conduct. This man was a havildar, or sergeant, by name Ramdoo. One day, when he was the orderly sergeant of his company for the week, a fire occurred in the lines or huts, where the men live, as European troops do in barracks. A thing like this happening, it was his duty to have reported it to the native officer of the quarter guard, and he did so. But I must not anticipate my story.

In the morning the colonel of the regiment had been informed of the fire, and as the native officer, when he was relieved, had not reported it to him, he told the adjutant to order him to his quarters, and then asked him why he had not reported the fire? He replied, that it had not been reported to him by the havildar or sergeant of the lines in

which the fire took place, and so he knew nothing about it. The havildar Ramdoo, however, still persisted he had done so; but the commanding officer, believing the superior rather than the inferior officer, ordered the latter to be confined, and tried him by a court-martial. But how did this happen? my readers may say. Surely, if the man had made the report, there must have been others that heard him make it, or saw him going to the guard to do so. It was perfectly true the man did make the report, but the other native officers, not wishing one of themselves to get into the trouble he would have done, told the man that, if he would before the court plead guilty, they would recommend him to mercy, and there would then be no chance of his losing his stripes. In an evil moment for him he consented, and pleaded guilty, although he had witnesses to prove he had reported the circumstance. He was sentenced to be reduced to the ranks, but recommended to mercy. The commanding officer, however, refused to accede to the recommendation—stating as his reason, and most justly so, that a non-commissioned officer who could tell such a deliberate falsehood was not worthy to hold the rank, and the man remained a private. This I call Act the First in my tale. We here see the folly and the wrong of not stating the truth. Had the man not allowed himself to be talked over into telling an untruth, by stating that he was guilty, his own witnesses would have cleared him.

Shortly after this had occurred, the regiment was ordered to another station. From this station there were several outposts, to which a company, and sometimes smaller guards were sent. To one of these outposts the company in which Ramdoo was, was ordered. As these outposts had been kept up for some time, the men had built huts for themselves, and they, on being relieved, gave them over to the relieving party. Ramdoo had a friend in the relieved party, who was the native officer of his party, and consequently had a very good hut, which he gave to him. The native officer of Ramdoo's company, the same one who was mentioned in the first part of this story, did not at all like this, as he wanted the hut for himself; but the man was obstinate, and refused to go out. Words arose between them, and the native officer reported the case to the European officer commanding the post. He ordered Ramdoo to give up the hut. The man said he would not give up the hut; that it had been given to him; that it was only spite, the native officer wishing to turn him out, and in his passion said that if he had to turn out of the hut, they should drag him out, and was very insubordinate, so much so that he was made a prisoner and sent in to the head quarters of the regiment to be tried. All natives have the privilege of being tried by a European court instead of a native one, should they wish it. He did, and he was tried by a European court. They were obliged to find him guilty, but the court thought there were so many extenuating circumstances that they recommended him to mercy, more especially as he had been wounded. The commander-in-chief confirmed the recommendation of the court,

and the man returned to his duty. This we will call Act the Second.

A short time after the above occurrence took place, an order was published by the Government, granting to every man, after twenty years' service, two rupees extra a month, or after sixteen years, one rupee, provided that their names had not been in the general defaulter book for a twelvemonth previous. Now Ramdoo, about whom I have been writing, having been tried by court-martial, as above related, was of course entered in the said defaulter book, and so was excluded from drawing the good-conduct pay until he had completed a year's service free from default. His loss of pay seemed to touch him more than anything, and he appealed to the native officer, and said, with some show of justice, "I have lost my rank first, and now my money, by following your advice, so, give me the entire pay I have lost." More especially he appealed to the senior native officer of the regiment, but he put him off with promises until I can only fancy the man grew desperate. He felt he was lost, and could neither get pity nor assistance from any, and in this mood he must have determined to have his revenge. He certainly did have that in a way, but the less culpable person was the victim.

One morning the regiment was paraded for a route march, viz., in the same order as if they were going a regular march, and on these occasions the regiment marches out into the country three or four miles and back. Not to expose the officers and men to the sun more than was necessary, the time of turning out was generally before break of day, so as to be ready to move when there was sufficient light. It appears that, on this morning, Ramdoo, after taking his musket and accoutrements out with his squad, must have loaded his musket with a ball cartridge, of which, at that time, every man carried six, on all occasions. In the morning twilight he was not missed; he had first gone to the hut of the native officer who had been, as he thought, his greatest enemy; viz., the one that wanted and did turn him out of his hut at the outpost; but he was on sick report, and so he was foiled in that direction. He returned to the parade, and went to the company that was commanded by the senior native officer. He had his musket, or rather the barrel of it, resting in his left arm, and pretended to be fixing the flint, when he went up to the native officer. The poor old man was doing what most natives do in the morning, eating betel nut, and, seeing the man, told him to fall in, as the officers' "call" would soon be sounded, and turned round for some reason or other. Ramdoo, seeing the opportunity, pulled the trigger. The musket went off and shot the gallant old man through the back. He reeled and fell, and Ramdoo, throwing away the musket, ran to or rather round the barracks. The poor old officer was carried to the hospital, and only lived a few minutes, and the culprit was seized by two havildars or sergeants of the rear company. Of course the news of the horrid act that he had done spread like wildfire, and not long after, the brigadier commanding came on parade. The men were not allowed to go to their huts for some hours, and all were aghast at such a frightful deed having been

done upon an inoffensive and gallant old man, who would, had he only lived a little longer, have retired from the service with honour and a well-earned pension. But alas! it was not so to be. He was as fine a specimen of the old native officer as there was in the army.

At the court of inquiry that immediately assembled, the man's guilt was clearly proved; it was his musket that had been discharged, and in his pouch was one round of ball cartridge missing. He was therefore made a close prisoner, and precautions were taken with his food, so that, had he determined to have destroyed himself by poison, his wife and child must have first fallen victims.

It took a long time to assemble the court, as the station was several hundred miles from the Presidency, and as the dak, or post, was only carried by men. The court assembled at last, and the man was tried. This time he did not demand a European court. He was found guilty, and sentenced to be blown away from a gun. As several crimes of a similar kind had about that time been committed, it was thought right to make a terrible example.

The usual way of carrying out the sentence of death, was to have all the troops paraded in full dress, and to make the culprit march up the line. Too often he was looked upon as a kind of martyr, particularly as the authorities, being Englishmen, and not of his religion, it was considered that, being condemned by them, thereby atoned as it were for his crime; and many a man of a fanatical turn of mind rather gloried in thus dying what he considered the death of a martyr. So the government directed, in this case, that there should be no show whatever: the gun was to be on the spot, and the ground kept by a strong picket from each regiment, in light marching order. Officers were to appear in their undress, and only those belonging to the companies ordered to form the guard were on duty.

On the day appointed, the unhappy man was taken from his cell and conveyed to the place of execution. He was tied to the gun, and, on a given signal, it was fired. It was a sickening sight. His head and two arms flew high up in the air, and the law had been vindicated, and the man who had shed man's blood was no more. The gun was immediately limbered up and marched off, and the guards the same.

After a time, the event was almost forgotten, as, not very long after, the regiment was ordered to another station; and thus ends my tale of a falsehood and its consequences. If any young persons should read this, and should they be ever tempted to tell an untruth, or even to prevaricate, let them remember the fate of poor Ramdoo; let them also recollect that a lie is the father of many lies, and that lying lips are an abomination to the Lord. Had this man not been persuaded to acknowledge that he was guilty when he was not so, his witnesses would have proved his innocence, and he would never have suffered such an ignominious death, nor the poor old native officer have come to such an untimely end. Through life, in weal or in woe, honesty is the best policy. Falsehood generally brings evil consequences even in this life; whilst in truthfulness there is honour and safety.

VARIETIES.

LORD ELDON AND THE CHANCERY BAR.—Note to pp. 439 and 576 ("Leisure Hour" Nos 498 and 506.) N. D. sends the following as the "true version of Sir George Rose's epigram:"—

"Mr. Leach made a speech,
Angry, neat, and wrong.
Mr. Hart, on the other part,
Was tedious, dull, and long.
Councillor Parker made that darker
Which was dark enough without;
Mr. Cook quoted his book,
And the Chancellor said, 'I doubt.'"

Another correspondent, J. W. S., sends a copy of the epigram, "from circuit traditions." "In 'The life of Lord Eldon,' by Twiss, published 1844, the epigram is given, with the exception of the lines referring to Bell and Power. Perhaps few verses can be quoted containing so many well-known legal celebrities in so small a compass. Leach, Master of the Rolls, called *Little Bags*, in contradistinction to his superior, *Old Bags* (Lord Eldon), and with reference to his well-known satin small-clothes and spindleshanks, and the well-worn clothes of the other. Hart (Sir Anthony), who ought to have been Chancellor of England, in preference to Erskine, had not Court influence been at work. He was appointed either Chancellor or Master of the Rolls in Ireland. Bell (Jockey Bell), a quondam senior wrangler and leader of the Chancery Bar, who would have been Lord Chancellor, had it not been for Lord Eldon:

"Non missura entem nisi plene cruoris hirudo."

"Bell wrote three hands; one he could read himself, one he could not, but his clerk could, for a fee; the last, neither could, so the clients sent it to be printed. Parker was V. C. Power and Cook were leading lawyers.

"Mister Leach made a speech,
Angry, neat, but wrong.
Mister Hart, on the other part,
Was heavy, dull, and long.
Mister Bell spoke very well,
Nobody knew about what.
Mister Power, after an hour,
Sat down perspiring and hot.
Mister Parker made the thing darker,
That was dark enough without.
Mister Cook cited his book,
And the Chancellor said, 'I doubt.'"

We must now leave the epigram to our legal readers, and to collectors of "the curiosities of literature."

"Non nostrum tantas componere lites."

DEAK, THE HUNGARIAN STATESMAN.—With the qualities and merits of the statesman and the patriot, Déak combines the advantages of a thoroughly humane character; his love of justice, disinterestedness, and honesty, are universally recognised. All the important societies in this country have elected him honorary member, in token of their honour and respect. His appearance does not display any traces of the exertions he has made on behalf of his country. Rather above the middle height, and with a tendency to *embonpoint*, this man of fifty-eight looks quite young and active. His face, enlivened by a healthy glow, with expressive, piercing eyes, surmounted by bushy brows, and a tall, open forehead, is a mirror of his open mind and firm character. His appearance and manners reveal the true old Hungarian, the type of the Hungarian gentleman before the ideo of March, 1848. In conversation he is instructive, but at the same time agreeable, attractive, and witty; he is fond of telling anecdotes, and has a remarkably fine memory. He is a Catholic, and in private life is eminently kind-hearted and charitable. He is not married, for he calls Hungary his betrothed, and lives very plainly. One part of the year he allows to excursions, and during the summer resides in Pesth, at the Hotel d'Angleterre; his leisure hours are devoted to scientific reading and management of public institutions, such as the Agricultural Society, the Hungarian Academy, etc. Some years back Déak accepted the guardianship of the children of the Hun-

garian poet, Vorösmarty, who died a beggar, though he was the author of the national hymn "Szozat," and collected for them the sum of ten thousand pounds. Such is the man to whom Hungary is now looking hopefully and longingly to restore her to her old position and rights.—*London Review*.

COMMISSARIAT OF A CITY HOUSE OF BUSINESS.—The number of departments in the Bow Churchyard establishment of Messrs. Copestake, Moore, Crampton, and Co. is 22. The number of the employed exceeds 400. Of these, between 30 and 40 are females. Nearly 100 are clerks. About 170 are warehousemen and apprentices, and the rest porters and boys. Not only all those employed on the premises, but customers arriving from the country, travellers, and heads of branch establishments, who choose to avail themselves of the hospitality of the firm, dine in the place. In one room a member of the firm entertains all who come, under the head of visitors. Into a large apartment, which serves admirably for a lecture-room, the young men troop to dinner in two successive companies of about 100 and 200. There is a third dining-room for the females; a fourth for the porters and packers. The culinary department is under the management of two housekeepers, and there are 20 domestic servants and waiters. There are 400 pounds of meat roasted daily, the heating being entirely by gas. Tea also is taken on the premises. We cannot but remark in passing, that the method of providing the employed with their meals is eminently judicious. It certifies the firm that every man and woman in their service is supplied with abundant and wholesome nourishment, which is the best guarantee for health, which, again, is the best guarantee of physical and mental activity. Frederick of Prussia said an army goes on its belly, and the remark, no less shrewd than coarse, will hold good of a great commercial establishment.—*The Dial*.

BISHOP WALDEGRAVE ON THE "ESSAYS AND REVIEWS."—It is impossible to contemplate, without most serious misgiving, a phenomenon such as that which has been exhibited in a recent notorious volume. The plenary inspiration and supreme authority of the Bible, the total corruption and certain condemnation of man, the miraculous incarnation and vicarious sacrifice of our Lord for man's redemption, the sovereign election and effectual operation of the Spirit in man's regeneration—all these are truths inwrought into the very closest relation to the recognised formulae of our Church. That clergymen who have given their solemn and deliberate, their reiterated adhesion to these formularies, should, without first resigning their posts, which they hold by virtue of such subscription, write and publish a work which, if it only be interpreted according to the common rules of language, can have no other intention than to sap and subvert our belief in every one of these fundamental verities, is indeed a stupendous moral phenomenon. Nor is amazement diminished when the authors of that book neither retract nor explain nor retire, but, pointing to the ill-advised indulgence which has been shown to men whose offence, grievous as it most certainly was, was far less pernicious than their own, claim to be the champions of free religious inquiry.

EARL RUSSELL ON THE CIVIL WAR IN AMERICA.—We now see two parties contending together, not upon the question of slavery—though that, I believe, is the original cause of the conflict; not contending with respect to free-trade and protection, but contending, as so many states of the Old World have contended, the one side for empire, and the other for power. Far be it from us to set ourselves up as judges in this matter; but I cannot help asking myself, as affairs progress in the contest, to what good end can it lead? Supposing this contest ended, by the reunion of its different parts, and that the South should agree to enter again with all the rights of the constitution, should we not again have that fatal subject of slavery brought in along with them? That subject of slavery, which caused, no doubt, the disruption, we all agree must, sooner or later, cease from the face of the earth.

THE LATE SIR WILLIAM CUBITT.—Sir William was of a different family from that of the late Thomas Cubitt, but he also had the merit of making his way from "nothing," to honour, eminence, and fortune. Thomas Cubitt began life as a carpenter—William Cubitt, as a joiner. At the age of twenty-two, he attracted notice by his invention of the self-regulating sails for windmills. He soon became known as a general engineer, and we may say *felt* too, for in 1825 he invented the Treadmill. This "Cubit measure," as the sentences were called, of so many months at the mill, terrified all the thieves in London, and they have never taken to it kindly. The chief of his other works were the enabling sea-going vessels to be navigated from Lowestoft to Norwich, and the construction of the South-Eastern Railway, to clear a road for which the great South Downs cliff was blown up, he personally superintending the undertaking. It was his experience that was employed to watch the erection of the Great National Exhibition, the iron and crystal building of 1851, and so provide for its security. For his exertions he received the honour of knighthood, and died in his 76th year, the pride of his native Norfolk village of Dilham.

DU CHAILLU CRITICISED BY WATERTON, THE NATURALIST.—"I condemn unhesitatingly Mr. Du Chaillu's description of a gorilla giving the negro a 'tremendous blow with its immense open paw.' Mr. Du Chaillu informs us that the gorilla met its adversary face to face, and 'used its arms as weapons of defence, just as a man or prize-fighter would.' Will Mr. Du Chaillu inform us what became of the 'huge superimpendent' body of the gorilla, when its slender and tottering legs were deprived of the aid which they received from the long arms, before it had put itself in the attitude of 'a man or of a prize-fighter?'"

INDIA-RUBBER VARNISH.—If india-rubber be cut into small pieces and digested in sulphuret of carbon, a jelly will be formed; this must be treated with benzine, and thus a much greater proportion of caoutchouc will be dissolved than would be done by any other method. The liquid must be strained through a woollen cloth, and the sulphuret of carbon be drawn off by evaporation in a water bath; after which, the remaining liquid may be diluted at will with benzine, by which means a transparent but still yellowish liquid will be obtained. This liquid incorporates easily with all fixed or volatile oils. It dries very fast, and does not shine, unless mixed with resinous varnishes. It is extremely flexible, may be spread in very thin layers, and remain unaltered under the influence of air and light. It may be employed to varnish geographical maps or prints, because it does not affect the whiteness of the paper, does not reflect light disagreeably, as resinous varnishes do, and is not subject to crack or come off in scales. It may be used to fix black chalk or pencil drawings; and unsized paper, when covered with this varnish, may be written on with ink.—*Galignani*.

DRUNK AS A LORD.—During the greater part of the last and the first quarter of the present century, a man proved himself to be somewhat nearer a gentleman if he drunk a good deal, and even very often got drunk, than by any other means. Why, you know, there is an old proverb or saying which is not yet quite out of date, but which, fortunately, has lost its application now, "Drunk as a lord." That is found in the old plays, and it must be taken as indicative of the habits of the higher classes at that time. But now what is the case? A total change has taken place. It has ceased to be genteel to get drunk; it has, in fact, almost become disgraceful. I am sorry to say that even in my own recollection a different state of things existed. When I first went to college I never heard of any instructor of youth who had taken the pledge; but I heard of many who had taken two bottles of wine at a time. The same influence has operated in other quarters, and a very great and general effort is now being made to spread education and do everything that is possible to raise the moral character of the people; and I do expect that the same results will follow as have been observable in the classes above them.—*Rt. Hon. C. P. Villiers, M.P.*